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—THE—

CATECHISM

—OR—

Simple Instruction from the Sacred Scriptures, as Taught by the Mennonite Church.

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"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."—I Cor. 3:11.

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PREFACE

This Catechism was first published at Elbing, Prussia, in 1783. It was republished by request of the churches in Hesse and Waldeck, in 1797. In 1824 it was published in Upper Canada. In 1844 it was reprinted and introduced in the churches in Pennsylvania. In 1848 it was translated into the English language and published by the Eastern District Conference. Since then it has passed through many editions. At the regular session of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America, convened in the Alexanderwohl Church, Kansas, in October of 1896, it was ordered to appear in a revised edition, and is now published by the Mennonite Book Concern.

PUBLICATION BOARD.

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Introduction.

What should be our chief aim in this life?

To live in God's communion, enjoy His favor, and obtain eternal happiness hereafter.—Matt. 6:33.

Have we not to care for temporal sustenance?

We have; but in a Christian manner, so that we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.—Matt. 6:31-34.

What is the kingdom of God, or in what does it consist?

In this life it is within all believers—it is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit—it is an eternal, blissful life with God and all the elect.—Luke 17:21; Rom. 14:17; Rev. 21:4.

How do we attain it?

By faith in God through Jesus Christ, our Savior.—John 17:3; Heb. 11:6.

Will a mere oral profession of our faith suffice?

No; faith without works is dead; faith must work by love.—James 2:26; Gal. 5:6.

The Creation.

Who created all things?

God, the Lord. In the beginning God created heaven and earth.—Gen. 1:1.

Who is God?

The only God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Matt. 28:19; I John 5:7.

How can we know that there is a God?

Nature and the testimony of the sacred Scriptures teach us that there is a God.—Rom. 1:19, 20; Deut. 6:4, 5.

How does nature teach us that there is a God?

All created things teach us that there must necessarily be a God, who created all things.—Job 12:7-10; Acts 17:24-28.

What does Paul say on this subject?

He says: Because that which may be known of God, is manifest: For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.—Rom. 1:19, 20.

What do the Sacred Scriptures testify of God?

That God is a Spirit; that He is one, everlasting, immutable, omnipresent, all-seeing, omniscient, all-wise, omnipotent, holy, righteous, incomprehensible, benevolent, gracious, merciful and long-suffering, etc.—John 4:24; II Cor. 3:17; Deut. 6:4; Psa. 90:2; James 1:17; Acts 17:27; Psa. 139:7-10; Jer. 23:23, 24; Psa. 94:11; Rom. 16:24; Gen. 17:1; Isa. 6:3; Deut. 32:4; Rom. 11:33; Psa. 103:8.

What are we to understand by the Sacred Scriptures?

The writings of the Old and New Testament, called the Bible.

Are these writings the Word of God?

They are: All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.—II Tim. 3:16.

Were the Scriptures not written as by the will of men?

By no means; but holy men of God spake, and also wrote, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.—II Peter 1:21; Rev. 1:11.

Are the Sacred Scriptures the infallible truth?

They are: for all things therein foretold of Christ have been literally fulfilled.—Matt. 26: 56; Luke 24:26, 27.

Is it profitable for us to diligently read the Sacred Scriptures?

It is: for if we from childhood know the Sacred Scriptures, they are able to make us wise unto salvation; but we have to pray God for the influence of the Holy Spirit to enlighten our understanding.—II Tim. 3:15; Eph. 1:18.

What do the Sacred Scriptures teach concerning the Trinity of God?

God revealeth Himself therein as the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.—I John 5:7.

What do the Sacred Scriptures testify of God the Father?

That He is the true Father over all called children, in heaven and upon earth; that He is the Father of all believers, and that He is, in a special manner, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Eph. 3:15; I Cor. 8:6; II Cor. 1:3.

What is said in the Sacred Scriptures of Christ, the Son of God?

That He is the true, own, and only begotten Son of God.—Psa. 2:7; Rom. 8:2; John 1:14.

Is Jesus Christ the Son of God, from all eternity?

Yes; He had been with the Father before the world was: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.—John 17:5; Mic. 5:2.

Is He also true God?

Yes: He is the true God, and eternal life.—I John 5:20.

What do the Sacred Scriptures teach us concerning the Holy Spirit?

That He is a true Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and is sent by the Son; and

thus emanating from the Father and the Son.—John 15:26.

Is the Holy Spirit also called God?

Yes: for when Ananias had lied to the Holy Spirit, Peter said: Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.—Acts. 5:3, 4.

Are, then, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit three Gods?

No: there is only one God: for these three are one.—Mark 12:29; I John 5:7.

By whom did God create all things?

He created all things by Jesus Christ: by whom He also made the world.—Eph. 3:9; Heb. 1:2.

Did the Holy Spirit also have a part in the work of the creation?

Yes: by the word of the Lord were the heavens made: and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.—Psa. 33:6.

In how many days did God create all things?

In six days God made heaven and earth and all things, and rested on the seventh day, and blessed it, and sanctified it.—Gen. 1 and 2.

What are we taught of man's creation?

God created man in His own image: in the image of God created He him.—Gen. 1:27.

How many human beings did God create in the beginning?

Only two: Adam and Eve, from whom all mankind descended.—Acts 17:26.

From what was Adam created?

From the dust of the ground: and God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.—Gen. 2:7.

How was Eve formed?

The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and He took one of

his ribs and made a woman from it, and brought her unto him.—Gen. 2:21, 22.

Where did the Lord God place our first parents, Adam and Eve?

In the Garden of Eden.—Gen. 2:8.

Are there also created beings in heaven?

Yes: the angels.—Heb. 1:6, 7; Col. 1:16.

What are angels?

They are ministering spirits.—Heb. 1:7-14.

To what end did God create the holy angels?

To praise and extol God Almighty, and minister to the good of His children.—Isa. 6:1-3; Matt. 18:10; Psa. 34:8.

Did the angels abide in their first estate?

Not all: some have left their habitation, and are kept in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.—Jude 6.

How are these called?

Evil spirits, or devils.—Luke 7:21; Mark 5:12.

What are their nature and actions?

They are enemies of God, and seek the eternal destruction of mankind.—I Peter 5:8.

Does God also provide for His creatures?

Yes: He causes the grass to grow for the beast, and corn for man. He gives all their meat in due season. He gives to all life and breath, and all things.—Psa. 115:14; 114:15; Acts 17:25.

Can nothing exist without God's sustaining providence?

No: for if He takes away their breath, they perish.—Psa. 104:29.

Does God govern all things that He created?

Yes: He governs the nations upon the earth, and He will reign forever and ever.—Psa. 67:4.

Can we comprehend God's providence and government?

No: God's ways are past finding out, and His judgments are unsearchable.—Rom. 11:33; Psa. 147:5.

What does all this teach us?

That we should confide in God, our Creator, Preserver and Ruler, cast all our cares upon Him, and seek His kingdom and righteousness, in the hope that all things shall be added unto us.—Matt. 6:33; I Peter 5:7.

The Fall of Man.

What was man's condition, in Paradise, in the Garden of Eden?

It was glorious and blessed.—Gen. 1:27-31.

Was man created good?

Yes; God made man upright—He created man in His own image.—Eccl. 7:29; Gen. 1:27.

In what does the image of God consist?

The image of God consists therein, that man is created in righteousness and true holiness.—Eph. 4:24.

Did Adam and Eve abide in that blessed condition?

No: they sinned and fell away from God, they and all their posterity.—Rom. 5:12-19.

By what act did our first parents sin toward God?

They did eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which God prohibited, and said, Thou shalt not eat thereof; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.—Gen. 2:17; 3:3.

What induced them to commit this sin?

An evil spirit, called the serpent, deceived them.—Gen. 3:4-13.

Who is the serpent?

It is the devil, or Satan, who is a murderer

from the beginning, and abode not in the truth. —Rev. 12:9; John 8:44.

By what did Satan deceive them?

He said: ye shall not surely die—ye shall be as gods, knowing good from evil.—Gen. 3:4, 5.

Why did they so readily believe?

They had a desire to be made wise, and be like unto God.—Gen. 3:6.

What were the consequences of Adam's transgressions?

That he, and all his posterity are subjected to sin, and death.—Rom. 5:12.

What kind of death passed upon Adam, and his posterity?

Spiritual and temporal death: the body must die, and return to earth; and man is made wholly incapable to do any good and is subject to eternal punishment.—Gen. 3:19; II Cor. 3:15; Rom. 5:16.

What happened to Adam's posterity?

All flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth, so that the Lord had to destroy them from the earth.—Gen. 6:12, 13.

Is there none on earth without sin?

That which is born of flesh, is flesh. None is without sin, except the Son of God, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost.—John 3:6; Luke 1:35; Heb. 7:26.

What do we learn from this?

From this we may learn that by nature we are prone to evil, and are children of wrath; and hence being convicted of our misery, we must seek God's grace and mercy.—Eph. 2:2, 3.

Man's Redemption.

Did the Lord God suffer man to remain in such a deplorable condition?

No: He redeemed His people.—Luke 1:68.

How did He redeem them?

By giving His only begotten Son.—John 3:16.

How could God give His son?

He had to assume human nature; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, this is, the devil.—Heb. 2:14, 15.

Was there no other way to redeem us?

No: none could, by any means, redeem his brother.—Psa. 49:7; Rev. 5:3, 4.

Was only One, our Savior, to die for all?

Yes: for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.—Rom. 5:19.

The Savior Promised.

How could man know that a Redeemer was to come and atone for sin?

The Lord God made this known to Adam; for He said to the serpent: The seed of the woman (Christ) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.—Gen. 3:15.

Has this promise reference to Christ?

It refers to Christ, who was crucified.—Col. 2:15; I John 3:8; Rev. 13:8.

Did the faithful, before the flood, believe in this promise?

Yes: by faith Abel offered unto God. Enoch and Noah were also believers.—Heb. 11:4-7.

To whom did God make this promise more clearly?

To Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, when He said: in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. Gen. 12:3; 26:4; 28:14; Gal. 3:16.

By what means did God nurture the people of Israel, before the advent of Christ?

He gave them the law of Moses; especially the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, written upon two tables of stone.—Exod. 20.

The Ten Commandments.

I. God spake all these words, saying: I am the Lord thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

IV. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

V. Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

VI. Thou shalt not kill.

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.

What is the sum of these ten commandments?

The first table commands us to love God with all the heart, with all the soul and with all the mind. The second table teaches us that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves.—Matt. 22:37-40.

Has the law only respect to actions?

No: it has special respect to the inward movings or desires of the heart.—I Tim. 1:5.

Does the law forbid secret lusts?

By all means; for it is written: Thou shalt not covet.—Rom. 7:7.

Has any one ever fully kept the law?

No: they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one.—Rom. 3:12.

For what purpose was the law given?

That it was to be a school-master, till Christ appeared; and that man might have a knowledge of sin.—Gal. 3:24; Rom. 3.20.

Did the prophets predict concerning the coming of Christ?

Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.—Acts 3:24.

What did Moses say of the Savior?

He said: The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken.—Deut. 18:15.

Are there any predictions in the Psalms concerning Christ?

Not only the writings of Moses and the prophets, but also the Psalms prophesy concerning Christ.—Luke 24:44.

The Savior's Coming and Work of Redemption.

When did the Savior appear in this world?

When the time, which had been predicted, was fully come, God sent His Son.—Gen. 49: 10; Gal. 4:4.

In what wise was His Birth?

He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and was born of the virgin Mary; and He was named Jesus.—Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:25.

Where was the Savior born?

At Bethlehem, in Judea.—Mic. 5:2; Luke 2:4.

What was the condition, in which He was born?

Poor and despised: He was born in a stable, at Bethlehem.—Luke 2:7.

Where was He brought up?

At Nazareth.—Luke 4:16.

When was Christ proclaimed as the Son of God?

When He was baptized of John, "and began to be about thirty years of age": for a voice was heard from heaven, which said: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. —Matt. 3:17; Luke 3:22.

Whereby did the Lord Jesus show that He is the Savior of the world?

By His doctrines and miracles; for He taught as one that had authority, and not as the scribes; and He performed also many miracles.—Mark 1:22; John 11:47.

What was the substance of His preaching?
Repent ye and believe the gospel. Mark 1:15.

What miracles did the Lord perform?
He opened the eyes of the blind, made the lame walk, cleansed lepers, unstopped the ears of the deaf, loosed the tongues of the dumb; He raised the dead; and did many other miracles.—Luke 7:19-22.

What did the Lord Jesus finally do for us?
He died for our sins according to the Scriptures?—I Cor. 15:3.

What is in reality the death of the Lord?
It is an offering for the sins of the whole world by which He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.—Heb. 10:14.

When did His sufferings begin?
In the night, in which He was betrayed by Judas, in the Garden of Gethsemane, His soul became exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. —Matt. 26:36-38.

Why had He to suffer such agony?
The Lord had laid on Him the iniquity of us all.—Isa. 53:6-7.

What followed His agony of soul?
He suffered Himself to be taken, condemned, and to be delivered over unto death, by Pontius Pilate, a Gentile judge.—Matt. 26 and 27.

What death did the Savior die?
He was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem, between two murderers.—John 19:17, 18.

Why had the Savior to die on the cross?
Thereby to redeem us from the curse; for it is written: Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.—Gal. 3:13.

Was the Lord Jesus also buried?
Yes: they laid Him in a new tomb, hewn out in the rock.—Matt. 27:60.

Did He remain in the tomb?

No: He arose on the third day, according to the Scriptures.—Luke 24:34; I Cor. 15:4; Psa. 16:10; John 2:1.

Of what does His resurrection assure us?

That we are justified through His blood: for He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.—Rom. 4:25.

Where did the Lord Jesus remain after His resurrection?

He shewed Himself alive to His disciples, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.—Acts 1:3.

What took place at the end of the forty days?

Jesus led out His disciples as far as Bethany, on Mount Olivet, and there ascended toward heaven.—Luke 24:50, 51; Acts 1:9-11.

What did the Lord Jesus obtain for us by His ascension?

By His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.—Heb. 9:12; I John 2:1.

The Lord Jesus having accomplished the work of redemption, in what offices are we to consider Him?

As our Prophet, High-priest and King.

In what does His prophetic office consist?

He teaches us the way to salvation, prophesies of future events, and confirms the same by miracles; for this was the office of a prophet under the Old Testament dispensation.—Deut. 18:15; Matt. 5:18, 19; Matt. 20:18, 19.

What did the Savior do as a High-priest?

As a High-priest He gave Himself an offering; He intercedes for His people; and blesses His own.—Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:26; John 17; Rom. 8:34; Luke 24:50; Eph. 1:3.

In what does Christ's office as a king consist?

He gives commands and laws: He governs His people; He puts all His enemies under His feet; He protects and rewards His own.—John 13:34; Jer. 23:5; I Cor. 15:25; Matt. 25:34.

What kind of kingdom has Jesus?

He has no temporal kingdom upon earth; but a spiritual kingdom of grace in His faithful believers; and He possesses a heavenly kingdom of glory, into which He will eventually bring all His believers.—John 18:36; Luke 1:33; 17:21; II Tim. 4:18.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit.

What gift did the Lord Jesus bestow upon His own, after His ascension?

He gave them the Holy Spirit, according to His promise.—John 14:16; Eph. 4:8; Rom. 8:15, 16.

When did this happen?

On the day of Pentecost.—Acts. 2:1-4.

Was the Holy Spirit given to the apostles only?

Peter said: For the promise is unto you, and to your children. God will give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.—Acts 2:39; Luke 11:13.

What is the work of the Holy Spirit in believers?

He testifies of Jesus; He comforts believers; He sanctifies them; and leads them into all truth; and through the Holy Spirit, the love of God is shed abroad in the hearts of believers.—John 15:26; 16:7-14; I Cor. 6:11; Rom. 5:5.

What did the Holy Spirit enable the apostles to do especially?

The Holy Spirit endowed them especially, to preach the gospel unto every nation; and to confirm it by miracles.—Acts 2:4.

Were the people of Israel to be especially called?

No; the Word of God was first to be spoken to the Jews; but afterwards to the Gentiles.—Acts 13:46.

Is it the will of God, that all men should be saved?

Yes; God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.—I Tim. 2:4.

Have all been redeemed?

Yes; Christ gave Himself a ransom for all.—I Tim. 2:6; Rom. 5:18.

Do all accept of this redemption?

No; all are not obedient to the gospel.—Rom. 10:16; II Thess. 1:8.

The Work of Grace in the Believer.

What is the true way to salvation?

Faith in Jesus Christ, our Savior, and His shed blood.—John 20:31; Matt. 16:16, 17; Rom. 3:25.

Does faith merit salvation?

No; but faith apprehends the merits of Christ, whereby we obtain salvation and eternal life.—John 3:36.

What is true faith?

It is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.—Heb. 11:1.

What does truth faith require?

Cordial repentance or contrition; that we become convinced of our depravity, and repent thereof.—Mark 1:15; Rom. 7:14.

Is a believer changed in heart?

Yes; he is converted from the error of his way unto Christ, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.—James 5:20; I Pet. 2:25; Luke 15: 17-19.

What is the change of heart called in the New Testament?

It is called Regeneration—a New Creation.—John 3:3; Gal. 6:15; Tit. 3:5.

Who produces or effects regeneration in us?

God Himself effects regeneration in us by His Word and Spirit, if we are obedient.—I Pet. 1:3; James 1:17; John 3:5.

Must every Christian needs be born again?

Yes; for without regeneration none can see the kingdom of God.—John 3:3-5.

Does regeneration produce a godly life?

Yes. Whosoever is born of God, does not commit sin.—I John 3:9.

Can we not, of our own strength, avoid sin, and do good?

No; for Christ says: Without Me ye can do nothing.—John 15:5.

Is, then, a holy conduct in life alone from Christ and His grace?

Yes; for Christ is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.—I Cor. 1:30.

What is justification?

It is the righteousness of Christ imputed to the penitent sinner by faith.—Rom. 4:5; II Cor. 5:21.

Is then a sinner justified by grace?

Yes; we are justified without any merits, by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.—Rom. 3:24.

What does justification avail us?

That we have peace with God, are His children, and are free from the service of sin, and are to be sanctified.—Rom. 5:1; 8:16; John 8:16.

What is sanctification?

To be sanctified is to be freed from the dominion of sin and to persevere in well-doing.—Rom. 6:22.

Must a Christian be sanctified or become holy?

Yes; for as He who has called us is holy, so we must be holy in all manner of conversation. —I Peter 1:15.

Who effects or works sanctification in us?

We are sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.—I Cor. 6:11.

The Church and Her Ordinances.

What is the church of God?

The collective body of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.—I Cor. 1:2.

How does Christ view His church?

As His body. He is the head of the body, the church.—Col. 1:18.

Are all who profess to belong to the church of God, true members of the body of Christ?

No; they only are true members, who by faith in Christ have become the children of God.—Gal. 3:26.

Are there to be teachers and ministers in the church?

Yes; the teachers are to preach the Word diligently and exhort; but the church is to hear and obey the Word.—II Tim. 4:2; Tit. 1:5; Heb. 13:17.

What did the Lord Jesus command concerning baptism?

He said to His disciples: Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.—Matt. 28:19.

Is baptism essential to salvation?

Christ said, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.—Mark 16:16.

Who are to be baptized?

All who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and are converted unto Him.—Acts. 2:38; Mark 16:16.

What end does baptism subserve?

It is the outward seal of the incorporation of the believer into the Lord Jesus Christ and His church.

What is the spiritual significance of baptism?

It teaches us that we are buried with Christ by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we should also walk in newness of life.—Rom. 6:4,5.

When and by whom was the Lord's Supper instituted?

By the Lord Jesus Himself, in that night when He was betrayed.—Matt. 26:26-28.

How did He institute it?

With bread and wine.—Luke 22:19, 20; I Cor. 11:23-25.

To what end was the holy supper instituted?

To commemorate the sufferings and death of Christ; as a token of communion with Christ; and communion of believers with each other. —Luke 22:19; I Cor. 11:25; 10:16, 17.

Is the holy supper to be often commemorated?

Yes; according to the example of the first Christians.—Acts 2:41, 42.

Who is to commemorate it?

All who have been baptized; penitents and believers.—Acts 2:41, 42.

What is required of them?

True examination. Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.—I Cor 11:27, 28.

What are we thereby to show forth?

We are thereby to show forth the Lord's death till He come.—I Cor. 11:26.

What did the Lord Jesus do to His disciples after the supper?

He washed their feet and said: If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.—John 13:14, 15.

Life and Conduct of the Believer.

What should be the believer's conduct in his daily walk and life?

As the redeemed of the Lord he should serve God in holiness and righteousness, which is acceptable to Him, and let his good works shine before men.—Luke 1:74, 75; Matt. 5:16.

Did the Lord Jesus give us also a command?

Yes; He said: A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.—John 13:34.

Should we love our enemies also?

Yes; Christ said: Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father in heaven.—Matt. 5: 44, 45.

What ought we to do, if we are injured by any one?

We are not to render evil for evil, or railing for railing.—I Peter 3:9.

Should a true Christian suffer patiently?

Yes; for it is written: For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.—I Peter 2:21; Matt. 10:22.

How does Christ comfort His own in their sufferings?

He says: Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you—for great is your reward in heaven.—Matt. 5:11, 12.

How shall a Christian conduct himself towards the authorities of his country?

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power, but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.—Rom. 13:1.

What says our Savior concerning taking oaths?

He says: But I say unto you, swear not at all—let your communications be, Yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil.—Matt. 5:34-37.

Is this said of all oaths?

Yes; for James says: But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath. —James 5:12.

What did the Lord Jesus say of idle words?

But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.—Matt. 12:36.

Domestic Life of the Christian.

Who instituted the marriage?

The Lord God Himself, with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.—Gen. 2:24.

What persons may enter the state of matrimony together?

Those not too near in blood-relationship, and of the same faith.—Lev. 18 and 20; I Cor. 7:39.

May married persons be divorced?

No; they shall not be divorced, save for the cause of fornication.—Matt. 19:3-9; 5:22.

How should married persons conduct themselves toward each other?

Husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies; and the women are to submit themselves unto their husbands.—Eph. 5:22.

What are parents to do for their children?

They are to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.—Eph. 6:4.

How are children to behave towards their parents?

They are to obey their parents in all things. Honor thy father and mother which is the first commandment with promise.—Col. 3:20; Eph. 6:1, 2.

What have men-servants and maid-servants to observe towards their superiors?

That they, in all things, obey their masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God; then they shall receive of the Lord the reward of the inheritance.—Col. 3:24.

How are superiors (head of families) to be disposed towards their domestics?

They should remember the admonition: Forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master is also in heaven neither is there respect of persons with Him.—Eph. 6:9.

Church Discipline.

If a brother or sister of the church should fall in sin, how should such a one be dealt with?

We are to restore such a one in the spirit of meekness.—Gal. 6:1.

But if the offender will not receive correction?

We are to admonish him two or three times. —Matt. 18:16.

But what are we to do with him, who refuses admonition, or persists to live in gross sin?

He is to be excommunicated from the church and we are to have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet we shall count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.—Matt. 18:17; I Cor. 5:11; II Thess. 3:6-15.

What if he repents?

Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted by many; we must the more forgive and comfort him.—II Cor. 2:5-7.

Prayer.

By what means do we obtain all things from God?

By prayer. Ask, and it shall be given unto you.—Matt. 7:7.

Should we use many words in prayer?

No; we are not to use vain repetitions, as the heathen do—for our Father in heaven knows what things we have need of, before we ask Him.—Matt. 6:7, 8.

How are we to call upon God, the Father?

In the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, that the Father may be honored in the Son.—John 14:13; Phil. 2:10; Rom. 10:13.

How did the Lord Jesus teach us to pray?

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen.—Matt. 6:9-13.

Does God, at all times, hear our prayer?

This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us. Still He does sometimes delay to grant our petitions, in order to test our faith.—I John 5:14; Matt. 15:22-28.

Are we to call upon the Lord Jesus?

Yes; they all shall honor the Son, as they honor the Father, and call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.—I John 5:14; I Cor. 1:2.

How do we call upon the name of the Lord Jesus?

As the mediator between God and man, who gave Himself a ransom for all.—I Tim. 2:5, 6.

What part has the Holy Spirit in our prayer?

He helpeth our infirmities; He teaches us how to pray; He maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.—Rom. 8: 26, 27.

What should we bear in mind in prayer?

Thanksgiving. But in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.—Phil. 4:6; Eph. 5:20.

Knowing and Doing.

Is it necessary that we should know good?

Yes; but knowledge without the proper application of it in our lives puffeth up; charity edifieth.—I Cor. 8:1.

In what spirit should we possess all knowledge?

We should be humble and unassuming; for if a man thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.—Gal. 6:3.

What benefit do we derive from knowledge?

We must know the will of God, that as children of the light we may walk after God in righteousness and true holiness.—I Thess. 5:4-11; Eph. 4:17-32; II Tim. 3:15.

Does mere knowledge, then, not suffice?

No; we must be doers of the Word.—James 1:22.

What is the duty of Christians, in all they do, in word or deed?

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.—Matt. 7:12; Col. 3:17.

What should we say when we have done all things?

We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.—Luke 17:10.

Death and Resurrection.

What is the end of this natural life?

The end of life is death.—Eccl. 12:7; Heb. 9:27.

Have all to die?

Yes; it is appointed unto men once to die.—Heb. 9:27.

Does the soul die with the body?

No; the soul is immortal, which no man is able to kill.—Matt. 10:28.

What becomes of the soul after death?

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, we are taught what becomes of the soul after death.—Luke 16:19-26; Eccl. 12:7.

Will there be any in the day of the last judgment, that will not die?

Yes; but they will be changed to immortality.—I. Cor. 15:51.

Will the bodies of the dead rise again?

Yes; there will be a future resurrection of the just and unjust.—Acts 24:15.

When will the dead rise?

At the last day. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible—John 6:39; I Cor. 15:51, 52.

Who will raise the dead?

God will raise up the dead, by Jesus Christ. —II Cor. 4:14.

Judgment and Reward.

What will follow the resurrection of the dead?

There will be a day, in the which God will judge the world in righteousness. We must then all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.—Acts 17:31; II Cor. 5: 10.

Who, then, will be the Judge?

Jesus Christ, the Son of God: for the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.—John 5:22-27.

How will this take place?

When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand; but the goats on the left.—Matt. 25:31-35.

Will there be no respect of persons?

For there is no respect of persons with God. He will reward every man according to his works.—Rom. 2:6-11.

Will men be judged only according to their works?

Men shall give an account also of every idle word, in the day of judgment.—Matt. 12:36.

Will secret thoughts also be brought into judgment?

The Lord will bring to light all hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and will judge the secrets of men.—I Cor. 4:5; Rom. 2:16.

How will sentence then be pronounced?

Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then shall the King say also to them on the left hand: Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.—Matt. 25:34-41.

What shall be the portion of the pious?

They will enter into eternal life, and be acquitted of all sin — and are before the throne

of God and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more; neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them into living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.—Rev. 7:15-17.

What will be the fate of the ungodly?

They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.—II Thess. 1:9.

What have we, in conclusion, to learn from all this?

We learn from all this, that heaven and earth shall perish, in a time and hour unknown to man; and that then the Lord will appear to reward every man according to his works. Therefore, we should always watch, and be prepared for the day of judgment, lest it meet us unexpectedly; we should always be ready to meet the Lord with joy, and to remain with Him unto all eternity. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed.

1. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

2. And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord,

3. Who is conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary;

4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died and buried;

5. The third day He rose again from the dead;

6. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty;

7. From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

8. I believe in the Holy Spirit.

9. I believe in a holy, general church; the communion of saints;

10. The forgiveness of sins;

11. The resurrection of the body;

12. And the life everlasting. Amen.

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